

HAER  
ILL  
50-LASAL,  
3-

ILLINOIS AND MICHIGAN CANAL, LIFT LOCK NO. 15  
I&M Canal National Heritage Corridor  
Canal Station 5087+00  
LaSalle  
LaSalle County  
Illinois

HAER No. IL-72

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Engineering Record  
National Park Service  
Department of the Interior  
P.O. Box 37127  
Washington, D.C. 20013-7127

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD  
ILLINOIS AND MICHIGAN CANAL, LIFT LOCK NO. 15  
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Location: I & M Canal National Heritage Corridor  
Canal Station 5087+00  
LaSalle, LaSalle County, Illinois

UTM: 16 E. 324580 N. 4576880  
Quad: LaSalle

Date of Construction: 1846-1848

Designer: William Gooding

Present Owner: State of Illinois

Present Status: Submerged, with lock gates removed

Significance: Lock No. 15 in LaSalle was one of the original locks designed by William Gooding, Chief Engineer, for the I&M Canal.

Project Information: The Illinois and Michigan Canal was designated a National Heritage Corridor in 1984. The following year HABS/HAER embarked on an extensive inventory and documentation project of the 100 mile-long corridor. Field work for this project was concluded in 1988. Final editing of the documentation was completed in 1992.

Historians: Gray Fitzsimons and Douglas Kupel, 1985

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In consultation with the renowned engineer Benjamin Wright, William Gooding, the chief engineer of the I & M Canal, designed the I & M Canal lift locks in 1837. Gooding chose a standard design for fifteen, deep-cut lift locks each with a width of 18' and a length of 110'. The original fifteen lift locks needed to overcome a change in elevation of 160' over a distance of ninety-eight miles. Stone for the lock chambers was obtained from local quarries, and the locks were laid with natural and hydraulic cement, much of it manufactured in Utica, Illinois. The original timber lock gates contained miter sills, hand-operated pivoting valves that permitted water into the lock chamber, and manually operated balance beams. Much of the work on the canal locks was carried out in 1846-48.

The lift locks remained in place until the 1930s when, after the I & M ceased commercial operation, the state reconstructed large sections of the canal for use as a recreational park. The Civilian Conservation Corps was extensively involved in the refurbishing of locks, locktender houses, aqueducts, and other canal structures.

Lift Lock No. 15 is the westernmost lock and about 200' west of Lock No. 14. Lock No. 15 originally had a lift of 11.52'. The lock was situated between the steamboat basin to the west and the canal boat basin to the east. Since the 1930s the lock has been submerged beneath the waters of the Illinois River. Its lock gates were removed and much of the lock chamber has silted in with mud.

**SOURCES:**

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